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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
/069 W
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R 190907Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4480
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: MAPAM COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS BREAK WITH LABOR PARTY

1. MAPAM'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE MET ON JANUARY 16 AND DECIDED TO RECOMMEND THAT THE PARTY LEAVE THE ALIGNMENT IF THE LABOR PARTY DOES NOT MODIFY ITS POSITION ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES SM AS TO STATE SPECIFICALLY ISRAEL'S READINESS TO CEDE TERRITORY IN THE WEST BANK. A MAJORITY IN THE COMMITTEE (40 OF THE 70 MEMBERS) SUPPORTED DISSOLVING THE ALIGNMENT BY JANUARY 30, WHEN MAPAM WILL HOLD ITS CONVENTION, IF THE LABOR PARTY'S PLATFORM COMMITTEE DOES NOT MEET THIS DEMAND BY THAT DATE. A MINORITY WANTED TO WAIT UNTIL THE LABOR PARTY'S CONVENTION (FEBRUARY 22) TO SEE WHETHERITHAT BODY WOULD SOFTEN THE PARTY'S TERRITORIAL PLANKS BEFORE DECIDING ON LEAVING THE ALIGNMENT. BOTH RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE MAPAM CONVENTION FOR DECISION. HOWEVER, THE COMMITTEE WAS UNITED IN RECOMMENDING THAT THE PARTY RUN INDEPENDENTLY SHOULD DEFENSE MINISTER PERES BE CHOSEN OVER RABIN TO HEAD THE LABOR PARTY LIST.
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2. COMMENT: DESPITE RABIN'S STRENUOUS EFFORTS IN RECENT WEEKS TO CONVINCE MAPAM TO REMAIN, THE MOOD FAVORS BREAKING UP THE ALIGNMENT. IT IS A MEASURE OF RABIN'S SUCCESS IN HIS MEETINGS WITH MAPAM LEADERS THAT THEY URGED WAITING

UNTIL THE LABOR PARTY CONVENTION BEFORE DECIDING--AND, OF

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COURSE, SOME STILL OPPOSE SPLITTING FROM THE ALIGNMENT EVEN IF THERE IS NO CHANGE IN THE LABOR PARTY'S POSITION ON THE WEST BANK. ONE OF THESE IS HAIM SHUR, EDITOR OF MAPAM'S NEWSIAPER, AL HAMISHMAR, SHUR, WHO BELIEVES RABIN IS A GOOD PRIME MINISTER, THINKS THAT MAPAM WOULD LOSE GROUND FROM ITS CURRENT STRENGTH OF SIX SEATS IN THE KNESSET BYN RUNNING ALONE. HE TOLD US THAT ALL THE "RIGHT-WINGERS" WANT MAPAM TO LEAVE THE ALIGNMENT SO AS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO JOIN A LABOR COALITION IN THE FUTURE. SHUR AGREED WITH PREVAILING OPINION THAT EVEN IF MAPAM RUNS INDEPENDENTLY, IT WOULD PROBABLY ENTER A LABOR LED COALITION GOVERNMENT AFTER THE ELECTION--BUT NOT IF PERES WERE PRIME MINISTER (SEE SEPTEL). SHUR SAID THERE WAS NO SUPPORT FOR MAPAM'S COMBINING WITH MOKED.

3. THERE IS A HINT OF DESPAIR WITHIN MAPAM THESE DAYS AS IT REALIZES THAT IT CAN EXERCISE LITTLE INFLUENCE OVER EVENTS. SHUR ADMITTED THAT THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY IS TURNING AGAINST THE LEFT. THE PARTY'S TEMPORIZING OVER REMAINING IN THE ALIGNMENT REFLECTS THE FEW CHOICES OPEN TO IT.

4. THE DEPARTURE OF MAPAM FROM THE ALIGNMENT WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT, IN THE EYES OF THE VOTERS, OF MOVING THE LABOR PARTY TO THE RIGHT. LABOR'S CHOICE OF PERES TO HEAD ITS LIST WOULD CONSIDERABLY INCREASE THAT PERCEPTION OF MOVE-MENT TO THE RIGHT.
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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